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ART. XI. — *Astoria, or Anecdotes of an Enterprise beyond the Rocky Mountains*. By WASHINGTON IRVING. In Two Volumes. 8vo. Philadelphia; Carey & Lea. 1836.

THE object of this work, as the name imports, is to narrate the history of the enterprise undertaken by Mr. Astor, to establish the fur trade at the mouth of the Columbia River. This enterprise, considered as a private undertaking, was equally marked with sagacity and commercial courage. In its connexion with public interests, it bid fair to be of vast political importance. Had it proceeded as prosperously as it was happily conceived, it would have laid the foundation of the settlement and colonization, under the auspices of the United States, of the mighty empire drained by the Columbia River and its tributaries. A most disastrous succession of events, both of a private and public nature, defeated the hopes and anticipations, with which the enterprise was undertaken. As a commercial adventure, it resulted in the almost total loss of the vast capital which had been embarked in it; and as a commencement of the settlement of the country, it was equally abortive. But this topic may demand more of our attention in the sequel of the article.

The ingenious avarice of civilization finds temptation everywhere; and no zone of the new-found regions of the East or the West but afforded scope for the pursuit of wealth, by the agency of the improved arts of Europe. It would not perhaps be an abuse of language, to pronounce the age, in which America was discovered and colonized, and a path opened to the East Indies, as the age of plunder; and man, we fear, might, among the other definitions, be not inaptly described as a stealing animal. The discovering nations, at the outset, appropriated to themselves the new-found regions, — continents and Archipelagoes coextensive with Europe, — and on this primitive and comprehensive robbery, they founded in detail the system of rapine, by which all the individual sources of wealth were turned into their coffers. Thus the adventurers of Europe swarmed out in pursuit of the gold and silver of Mexico, Peru, and Brazil, the spices of the Moluccas, the silks of India, and the men of Africa. The kindred blood of common humanity formed no exemption; and benevolence instituted her plunder, (the most iniquitous of all others,)

in order to alleviate the misery caused by the plunders of avarice. Men were stolen from Africa, in the philanthropic purpose of mitigating the hardships inflicted by the gold-stealers of America on the oppressed natives of the new world!

A curious dissertation might be written on the ingenuity, which has been applied to the work of pillage, by the great nations of modern times. The various modes under which the one great end has been pursued, the instruments which have been employed, the pretences which have been pleaded, the institutions which have been gradually organized for this purpose, form a new text of international law, — a sort of anti-constitutional system of politics, a code of ethics founded on the scorn of morality, and a religious faith clothed in Christian language and breathing a spirit hot from Pandemonium. It is not in the *Arabian Nights*, but in the sober history of Europe, that we read of a proclamation of the Pope, giving to the Portuguese all on one side of a certain meridian, and to the Spaniards, all on the other. It is a fact equally well authenticated, that the entire native population of Cuba, an inoffensive, gentle race, amounting, it is said, to millions, were exterminated as idolaters, by a band of refined, high-spirited, and Christian conquerors. They were exterminated, because the island was of convenient dimensions to be immediately reduced to plantations, cultivated with tropical products; and the African race was found more patient of labor than the Indian. The natives of Mexico and Peru, after the sword of the conquerors had reaped the first bloody harvest of desolation, were enslaved and preserved. It was found that a degraded native caste was the most efficient instrument for the mineral enterprises of the Spanish nobility, to whom the country had been granted. So that under the auspices of one and the same power, and in the same hemisphere, we see in one quarter a native population exterminated, in another preserved; exterminated through zeal for religion; — preserved to be enslaved. The element of force is, of course, a component part of this monstrous system of politics, and this is furnished by the veteran troops of Castile. Africa, entrenched in her pestiferous marshes, — guarded from conquest by her contagious fevers and blasted deserts, invincible beneath the fevers of her vertical sun, and strong in her myriads of fierce and unsubdued barbarians, — she too is soon

linked in with frightful ingenuity, into the all-grasping system of gainful violence. Her savage princes are stimulated to eternal wars, and America is thrown open as one great slave-market for their prisoners; and thus, without an attempt to take possession of any part of the African continent, beyond a few spots on the coast, occupied for the purposes of the traffic, this entire quarter of the globe has been subjugated by nations, that never set foot upon it,—wasted by a distant foe,—ravaged by powers that sit quietly at home, in a distant quarter of the globe,—desolated without hostile navies or armies, and made herself the eager instrument of her own ruin. But even these strange combinations of vice and misery, of crime and woe, do not exhaust the ingenuity of modern civilization. With substantially the same results, a totally different method of procedure is pursued in the East. The miner subdues some ores by roasting them in vast fires; others are pounded into dust by mighty trip-hammers; and in others a curious process of amalgamation draws out the precious metal from its native compound. So the colonizer, (if we may be pardoned so formal a comparison,) by turns lays waste with fire and sword;—with the heavy mace of oppression, crushing, but not quite destroying;—and with a subtler interference of civilized arts and power in native policy, which conquers empires, without abating an epithet from the grandiloquent titles of their native sovereigns. This last is the policy, with which Great Britain has conquered and holds Hindostan. It was a matter of curiosity to see how, in the last half of the eighteenth century, by a nation of Protestant Christians, of constitutional politicians, the metropolis of philanthropy, the citadel of liberty, the problem of subjugating a hundred and thirty millions of unoffending and unwarlike fellow beings would be solved. In the middle of the last century, the British empire in America and in India, formed a curious contrast. In America, Quebec fell in 1759, before a handful of brave men, led by an adventurous young officer, and the entire continent from the Gulf of Mexico to the North Pole, passed under the British sceptre, in consequence of a victory, in which were sowed the seeds of a revolution, destined shortly to deprive Great Britain of almost all that was valuable in her American empire. In India, in 1756, the British empire was shut up, by the barbarous subaltern of an Indian prince, in the black hole of

Calcutta ; and now, eighty years only have passed away, and from the foot of the Himala Mountains to the southernmost point of Ceylon, — from the Indus to the Irrawaddy, — a territory equal to the entire domain of the United States east of the Rocky Mountains, receives the law from the India House, in London. Talk of Alexander and Cæsar, of Napoleon and Wellington ; the British East India Company, the incorporate hero, the chartered despot of modern days, outshines them all. Paragon indeed of policy, prowess, and fortune ! Wonderful in itself as a political phenomenon ; momentous in its probable influence on a fifth or sixth portion of the human race ; — but truly astounding as the work of British power, achieved under the sanction of British laws ; — as if it had been the object of her statesmen, out of her free institutions of constitutional liberty at home and her stupendous tyranny at the Antipodes, to build up the grandest political dualism the world has ever seen ; — a temporal Manichæism, only less extensive and terrific, than that to which ancient philosophers subjected the moral universe.

We are not quite so far from Astoria, in these discursive suggestions, as might at first be thought. When the British colonies on the American continent were, by the peace of 1783, separated from the territory recently conquered from France, that territory, the only remaining possession of Great Britain on the continent, still constituted a mighty empire, about equal, in geographical extent, to the United States of America or the continent of Europe. This territory too has been penetrated and colonized, by a process still going on, peculiar in its character and (thanks to the climate) with less offence to the laws of humanity, than any other, with which the march of colonial empire has ever been marked. This whole mighty region, from the eastern shores of Labrador to the mouth of the Columbia River, is traversed by a chain of hunting posts. A mighty despotism exists ; but it is one of peltry, — the sea otter and the beaver have been the principal victims. The human population has found safety, by entering into the alliance against their four-footed neighbours of the woods ; and we understand, there are actually regions, within the chain of posts belonging to the North-west Company, where both Indians and beavers are on the increase. What will be the future character of this grand venatical empire, it is impossible to foresee. From a considerable portion of the hunted territory,

the rigors of the climate will for ever exclude a dense civilized population. Whether the hunting stations, in many parts, will not eventually prove so many centres of communities subsisting by such agriculture, as the soil and climate admit, by the commerce of exchange and supply, required by the wants of the company's establishments, and by the mechanic arts, may be a matter of doubt. We incline to think they will, and that by degrees, the interior of the continent north of the United States will in this way become settled. The progress, however, will be slow. Better land in a more tolerable climate will for a long time give a more southerly direction to the current of adventure; and hunting posts are very far from being the establishments most disposed to invite a permanent neighbourhood. We have heard dark suggestions, that an interloping squatter is very apt at dusk to fall in with a chance rifle-bullet, travelling the same road, and with too short notice, to turn out of its way. Mr. Irving inclines to regard the fur trade as the instrument, by which this part of the continent will eventually be settled, "leading the way to remote regions of beauty and fertility, that might have remained unexplored for ages, and beckoning after them the slow and pausing steps of agriculture and civilization."

Mr. Irving observes in the Introduction to his work, that, in the course of occasional visits to Canada, many years since, he became acquainted with some of the principal partners of the great North-west Fur Company, who at that time lived in genial style at Montreal, and kept almost open house for the stranger. At their hospitable boards he occasionally met with partners, and clerks, and fur traders from the interior posts; men who had passed years remote from civilized society, among distant and savage tribes, and who had wonders to recount of their wild and wide peregrinations, their hunting exploits, and their perilous adventures and hair-breadth escapes among the Indians. "I was then," continues Mr. Irving,

"I was then at an age, when the imagination lends its coloring to every thing, and the stories of these Sinbads of the wilderness made the life of a trapper and a fur trader perfect romance to me. I even meditated at one time a visit to the remote posts of the company, in the boats which annually ascended the lakes and rivers, being thereto invited by one of the partners; and I have ever since regretted that I was prevented

by circumstances from carrying my intention into effect. From those early impressions, the grand enterprises of the great fur companies, and the hazardous errantry of their associates in the wild parts of our vast continent, have always been themes of charmed interest to me; and I have felt anxious to get at the details of their adventurous expeditions among the savage tribes, that peopled the depths of the wilderness." — pp. 3, 4.

Thus prepared to engage with enthusiasm in the subject, Mr. Irving gladly availed himself of the opportunities, which the friendship of Mr. John Jacob Astor afforded him, to learn the history of the enterprise projected by that gentleman, for the establishment of the fur trade west of the Rocky Mountains. The journals of the persons in Mr. Astor's employment, and their correspondence with the projector of the establishment, furnished the materials of the inquiry; the publications of contemporary travellers across the American *steppes*, from Lewis and Clarke down, supplied additional illustrations; and the volumes before us are the result.

We have read them with interest and profit. The anecdotes they relate are many of them of a spirit-stirring character, as we shall presently show by some specimens. Considerable valuable information relative to the enterprise of Mr. Astor, the North American fur trade, and the Indian tribes, on both sides of the Rocky Mountains, is placed in a highly attractive form. The whole work bears the impress of Mr. Irving's taste. A great variety of somewhat discordant materials is brought into a consistent whole, of which the parts have a due reference to each other; and some sketches of life and traits of humor come fresh from the pen of Geoffrey Crayon. If it be necessary to find any fault with the work, we might object to some of the details of the overland journeys across the Rocky Mountains, as being, after the publications already given to the world, deficient in the interest of novelty, and for that reason, less entitled to the space they occupy. They are, however, as well worth reading as nine tenths of the personal narratives of travellers, even of the most respectable class; and nothing can be objected to them, but their want of claim to the honor of being recorded by Mr. Irving's classical pen. We cannot forbear remarking, that we presume it is merely by accident, that the unfinished map in the second volume has found admission into the work.

The first chapter relates the rise and progress of the fur

trade in Canada; and a highly graphic account is given of the personages by whom it was carried on. The following is the description of one class of them, called "*Coueurs des bois*."

"A new and anomalous class of men gradually grew out of this trade. These were called *coueurs des bois*, rangers of the woods; originally men who had accompanied the Indians in their hunting expeditions and made themselves acquainted with remote tracts and tribes; and who now became, as it were, pedlars of the wilderness. These men would set out from Montreal with canoes well stocked with goods, with arms and ammunition, and would make their way up the mazy and wandering rivers that interlace the vast forests of the Canadas, coasting the most remote lakes, and creating new wants and habitudes among the natives. Sometimes they sojourned for months among them, assimilating to their tastes and habits with the happy facility of Frenchmen; adopting in some degree the Indian dress, and not unfrequently taking to themselves Indian wives.

"Twelve, fifteen, eighteen months would often elapse without any tidings of them, when they would come sweeping their way down the Ottawa in full glee, their canoes laden down with packs of beaver skins. Now came their turn for revelry and extravagance. 'You would be amazed,' says an old writer already quoted, 'if you saw how lewd these pedlars are when they return; how they feast and game, and how prodigal they are not only in their clothes, but upon their sweethearts. Such of them as are married have the wisdom to retire to their own houses; but the bachelors act just as an East Indiaman and pirates are wont to do; for they lavish, eat, drink, and play all away as long as the goods hold out; and when these are gone, they even sell their embroidery, their lace and their clothes. This done, they are forced upon a new voyage for subsistence.'\*

"Many of these *coueurs des bois* became so accustomed to the Indian mode of living, and the perfect freedom of the wilderness, that they lost all relish for civilization, and identified themselves with the savages among whom they dwelt, or could only be distinguished from them by superior licentiousness. Their conduct and example gradually corrupted the natives, and impeded the works of the Catholic missionaries, who were at this time prosecuting their pious labors in the wilds of Canada."

— Vol. i. pp. 15–17.

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\* "La Hontan, Vol. i. Let. 4."



The following is also a highly spirited sketch.

“To behold the North-west Company in all its state and grandeur, however, it was necessary to witness an annual gathering at the great interior place of conference established at Fort William, near what is called the Grand Portage, on Lake Superior. Here two or three of the leading partners from Montreal proceeded once a year to meet the partners from the various trading posts of the wilderness, to discuss the affairs of the company during the preceding year, and to arrange plans for the future.

“On these occasions might be seen the change since the unceremonious times of the old French traders; now the aristocratical character of the Briton shone forth magnificently, or rather the feudal spirit of the Highlander. Every partner, who had charge of an interior post, and a score of retainers at his command, felt like the chieftain of a Highland clan, and was almost as important in the eyes of his dependents as of himself. To him a visit to the grand conference at Fort William was a most important event; and he repaired there as to a meeting of parliament.

“The partners from Montreal, however, were the lords of the ascendant; coming from the midst of luxurious and ostentatious life, they quite eclipsed their compeers from the woods, whose forms and faces had been battered and hardened by hard living and hard service, and whose garments and equipments were all the worse for wear. Indeed, the partners from below considered the whole dignity of the company as represented in their persons, and conducted themselves in suitable style. They ascended the rivers in great state, like sovereigns making a progress; or rather like Highland chieftains navigating their subject lakes. They were wrapped in rich furs, their huge canoes freighted with every convenience and luxury, and manned by Canadian voyageurs, as obedient as Highland clansmen. They carried up with them cooks and bakers, together with delicacies of every kind, and abundance of choice wines for the banquets which attended this great convocation. Happy were they, too, if they could meet with some distinguished stranger, above all, some titled member of the British nobility, to accompany them on this stately occasion, and grace their high solemnities.

“Fort William, the scene of this important annual meeting, was a considerable village on the banks of Lake Superior. Here, in an immense wooden building, was the great council hall, as also the banqueting chamber, decorated with Indian arms and accoutrements, and the trophies of the fur trade. The house

swarmed at this time with traders and voyageurs, some from Montreal, bound to the interior posts; some from the interior posts, bound to Montreal. The councils were held in great state, for every member felt as if sitting in parliament, and every retainer and dependent looked up to the assemblage with awe, as to the House of Lords. There was a vast deal of solemn deliberation, and hard Scottish reasoning, with an occasional swell of pompous declamation.

"These grave and weighty councils were alternated by huge feasts and revels, like some of the old feasts described in Highland castles. The tables in the great banqueting room groaned under the weight of game of all kinds; of venison from the woods, and fish from the lakes, with hunters' delicacies, such as buffaloes' tongues and beavers' tails, and various luxuries from Montreal, all served up by experienced cooks brought for the purpose. There was no stint of generous wine, for it was a hard-drinking period, a time of loyal toasts, and bacchanalian songs, and brimming bumpers.

"While the chiefs thus revelled in hall, and made the rafters resound with bursts of loyalty and old Scottish songs, chaunted in voices cracked and sharpened by the northern blast, their merriment was echoed and prolonged by a mongrel legion of retainers, canadian voyageurs, half-breeds, Indian hunters, and vagabond hangers-on, who feasted sumptuously without on the crumbs that fell from their table, and made the welkin ring with old French ditties, mingled with Indian yelps and yellings.

"Such was the North-west Company in its powerful and prosperous days, when it held a kind of feudal sway over a vast domain of lake and forest. We are dwelling too long, perhaps, upon these individual pictures, endeared to us by the associations of early life, when, as yet a stripling youth, we have sat at the hospitable boards of the 'mighty North-westers,' then lords of the ascendant at Montreal, and gazed with wondering and inexperienced eye at their baronial wassailing, and listened with astonished ear to their tales of hardships and adventures. It is one object of our task, however, to present scenes of the rough life of the wilderness, and we are tempted to fix these few memorials of a transient state of things fast passing into oblivion; — for the feudal state of Fort William is at an end; its council chamber is silent and deserted; its banquet hall no longer echoes to the burst of loyalty, or the 'auld world' ditty; the lords of the lakes and forests have passed away; and the hospitable magnates of Montreal — where are they?" — Vol. I. pp. 23–25.

Having sketched the history of the Canadian fur trade, Mr. Irving proceeds to the more immediate subject of his work, the enterprise of Mr. Astor, which had for its object to divert a portion of this lucrative traffic into a new channel. The following brief biographical notice of this eminent person will give pleasure to our readers, and afford them a sufficient idea of the general character of the project, of which the history is written in the present work.

“John Jacob Astor, the individual in question, was born in the honest little German village of Waldorf, near Heidelberg, on the banks of the Rhine. He was brought up in the simplicity of rural life, but, while yet a mere stripling, left his home, and launched himself amid the busy scenes of London, having had, from his very boyhood, a singular presentiment that he would ultimately arrive at great fortune.

“At the close of the American Revolution he was still in London, and scarce on the threshold of active life. An elder brother had been for some few years resident in the United States, and Mr. Astor determined to follow him, and to seek his fortunes in the rising country. Investing a small sum which he had amassed since leaving his native village, in merchandise suited to the American market, he embarked, in the month of November, 1783, in a ship bound to Baltimore, and arrived in Hampton Roads in the month of January. The winter was extremely severe, and the ship, with many others, was detained by the ice in and about Chesapeake Bay for nearly three months.

“During this period, the passengers of the various ships used occasionally to go on shore, and mingle sociably together. In this way Mr. Astor became acquainted with a countryman of his, a furrier by trade. Having had a previous impression that this might be a lucrative trade in the new world, he made many inquiries of his new acquaintance on the subject, who cheerfully gave him all the information in his power as to the quality and value of different furs, and the mode of carrying on the traffic. He subsequently accompanied him to New York, and by his advice, Mr. Astor was induced to invest the proceeds of his merchandise in furs. With these he sailed from New York to London in 1784, disposed of them advantageously, made himself further acquainted with the course of the trade, and returned the same year to New York, with a view to settle in the United States.

“He now devoted himself to the branch of commerce with which he had thus casually been made acquainted. He began his career, of course, on the narrowest scale; but he brought to

the task a persevering industry, rigid economy, and strict integrity. To these were added an aspiring spirit that always looked upward; a genius bold, fertile, and expansive; a sagacity quick to grasp and convert every circumstance to its advantage, and a singular and never-wavering confidence of signal success.\*

"As yet, trade in peltries was not organized in the United States, and could not be said to form a regular line of business. Furs and skins were casually collected by the country traders in their dealings with the Indians or the white hunters, but the main supply was derived from Canada. As Mr. Astor's means increased, he made annual visits to Montreal, where he purchased furs from the houses at that place engaged in the trade. These he shipped from Canada to London, no direct trade being allowed from that colony to any but the mother country.

"In 1794 or '5, a treaty with Great Britain removed the restrictions imposed upon the trade with the colonies, and opened a direct commercial intercourse between Canada and the United States. Mr. Astor was in London at the time, and immediately made a contract with the agents of the North-west Company for furs. He was now enabled to import them from Montreal into the United States for the home supply, and to be shipped thence to different parts of Europe, as well as to China, which has ever been the best market for the richest and finest kinds of peltry.

"The treaty in question provided, likewise, that the military posts occupied by the British within the territorial limits of the United States, should be surrendered. Accordingly, Oswego, Niagara, Detroit, Michilimackinac, and other posts on the American side of the lakes, were given up. An opening was thus made for the American merchant to a trade on the confines of Canada, and within the territories of the United States. After an interval of some years, about 1807, Mr. Astor embarked in this trade on his own account. His capital and resources had by this time greatly augmented, and he had risen from small beginnings to take his place among the first merchants and financiers of the country. His genius had ever been in advance of his circumstances, prompting him to new and wide fields of enterprise beyond the scope of ordinary merchants. With all

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"\* An instance of this buoyant confidence, which no doubt aided to produce the success it anticipated, we have from the lips of Mr. A. himself. While yet almost a stranger in the city, and in very narrow circumstances, he passed by where a row of houses had just been erected in Broadway, and which from the superior style of their architecture, were the talk and boast of the city. 'I'll build, one day or other, a greater house than any of these, in this very street,' said he to himself. He has accomplished his prediction."

his enterprise and resources, however, he soon found the power and influence of the Michilimackinac (or Mackinaw) Company too great for him, having engrossed most of the trade within the American borders.

"A plan had to be devised to enable him to enter into successful competition. He was aware of the wish of the American government, already stated, that the fur trade within its boundaries should be in the hands of American citizens, and of the ineffectual measures it had taken to accomplish that object. He now offered, if aided and protected by government, to turn the whole of that trade into American channels. He was invited to unfold his plans to government, and they were warmly approved, though the executive could give no direct aid.

"Thus countenanced, however, he obtained in 1809, a charter from the legislature of the State of New York, incorporating a company under the name of 'The American Fur Company,' with a capital of one million of dollars, with the privilege of increasing it to two millions. The capital was furnished by himself,—he, in fact, constituted the company; for, though he had a board of directors, they were merely nominal; the whole business was conducted on his plans, and with his resources; but he preferred to do so under the imposing and formidable aspect of a corporation, rather than in his individual name, and his policy was sagacious and effective.

"As the Mackinaw Company still continued its rivalry, and as the fur trade would not advantageously admit of competition, he made a new arrangement in 1811, by which, in conjunction with certain partners of the North-west Company, and other persons engaged in the fur trade, he bought out the Mackinaw Company, and merged that and the American Fur Company into a new association, to be called 'The South-west Company.' This he likewise did with the privity and approbation of the American government.

"By this arrangement Mr. Astor became proprietor of one half of the Indian establishments and goods which the Mackinaw Company had within the territory of the Indian country in the United States, and it was understood that the whole was to be surrendered into his hands at the expiration of five years, on condition that the American company would not trade within the British dominions.

"Unluckily the war which broke out in 1812 between Great Britain and the United States suspended the association, and after the war, it was entirely dissolved; Congress having passed a law prohibiting British fur traders from prosecuting their enterprises within the territories of the United States."—Vol. i. pp. 27–31.

In carrying his project into effect, Mr. Astor proposed to send a vessel round Cape Horn, with two of the partners of his enterprise, and a portion of the clerks and *employés*. They were to establish a post at the mouth of the river and commence their operations, while another party should proceed, by an overland route, following substantially the course of Lewis and Clarke. The adventures of this party fill a considerable portion of the work, and it is partly to them, that a remark which we have above hazarded applies. We would also observe, (being wise after the event,) that we do not perceive the motives of expediency in which this portion of the enterprise was planned. The fate which befell it was such, it seems to us, as might, with reasonable certainty, have been foreseen. Two things were to be done; to found an establishment at the mouth of the Columbia River, and to connect that establishment with a system of hunting posts in the interior. But it was not, as far as we comprehend, intended to establish a chain of stations from the Pacific to St. Louis. The furs were to be taken up by Mr. Astor's vessels at the mouth of the river, and carried to a market. Nor, if the project had embraced a chain of posts across the country, does it appear to us that Mr. Hunt's journey, with a party of hunters, contributed in any degree to effect that object. It would seem as if it would have been safer and simpler, with the ample means at the disposal of the founder of the enterprise, to send the whole of the adventurers round Cape Horn, and let them work their way gradually eastward, from the mouth of the river.

The first step taken by Mr. Astor was to despatch the *Tonquin* by sea. A very amusing account of the voyage is given by Mr. Irving. The heterogeneous composition of the ship's company, and the rather unaccommodating temper of its commander, Jonathan Thorn, caused it to be a succession of vexations and troubles, somewhat ominous of the fate of the enterprise. On the 8th of September, 1810, the vessel put to sea, and on the 11th of February following, came in sight of Owyhee. An interesting account is given of the Sandwich Islands, of king Tamaahmaah, of his favorite Governor John Young, and of Captain Thorn's vexations and worryings, in consequence of the erratic dispositions of his company. At length, however, he got them safely to sea on the 28th of February, and on the 22d of March, made the

mouth of the Columbia River. The entrance of this river is, at certain periods, exceedingly difficult, in consequence of the bars and sand-banks, with which the passage is obstructed, and a heavy surf which rolls in from sea. Here the disasters of the *Tonquin* commenced. Her first mate, with an experienced seaman and three Canadian voyageurs, were sent by the captain, (against the presentiments of the mate, whose father had perished some years before on this coast,) to sound the passage into the river. No tidings were ever heard of the crazy whale boat, in which he was despatched upon this dangerous service, nor of her ill-fated crew. The next day another boat with the armorer and four other persons, two of whom were Sandwich islanders, taken on board at Owyhee, was sent on a similar errand. This boat perished in the furious surf, and the armorer and one of the Sandwich Islanders alone escaped. A deep gloom, of course, was cast over the very commencement of the enterprise, by the loss of eight men at the outset. The brief account of the humble ceremonial, at the burial of the Sandwich islander, is truly pathetic.

"Towards night the Sandwich islanders went on shore, to bury the body of their unfortunate countryman who had perished in the boat. On arriving at the place where it had been left, they dug a grave in the sand, in which they deposited the corpse, with a biscuit under one of the arms, some lard under the chin, and a small quantity of tobacco, as provisions for its journey in the land of spirits. Having covered the body with sand and flints, they kneeled along the grave in a double row, with their faces turned to the east, while one who officiated as a priest sprinkled them with water from a hat. In so doing he recited a kind of prayer or invocation, at which, at intervals, the others made responses. Such were the simple rites performed by these poor savages at the grave of their comrade on the shores of a strange land; and, when these were done, they rose and returned in silence to the ship, without once casting a look behind." — Vol. I. pp. 87, 88.

A beginning was made of a post near the mouth of the river, and the name *Astoria* given to the establishment. Friendly relations were formed without difficulty with the Chinooks, the tribe of Indians occupying this part of the territory. Their one-eyed chief, Concomly, proved, from the first, a good friend to the new comers, and in the course of

time this amicable understanding was cemented by a marriage, as Mr. Irving calls it, between his daughter and Mr. McDougal, one of the partners in the concern, who had come out in the Tonquin. Parties were sent into the interior to explore the country; a post was established on one of the tributaries of the Columbia, at some distance from its mouth, and progress made in carrying into effect the purposes for which the enterprise was undertaken. On all these matters Mr. Irving's book contains interesting details.

After a short time passed at the river, the Tonquin sailed for the ulterior objects of her voyage along the coast. She had twenty-three men on board, when she left the river, on the 5th of June; and in one of the outer bays, she picked up, from a fishing canoe, an Indian named Lamazee, who had already made two voyages along the coast, and knew something of the languages of the various tribes. He agreed to accompany them as an interpreter. Steering to the north, Captain Thorn arrived in a few days at Vancouver's Island, and anchored in the harbour of Neweetee, very much against the advice of the Indian interpreter, who warned him against the perfidious character of the natives of this part of the coast. Captain Thorn, irritated by the shrewdness and pertinacity which the natives manifested in their traffic, (in what school they learned those qualities, it is not necessary to state), seized an otter-skin from the hands of a cunning old chief, who was higgling about its price, rubbed it in his face, and kicked him over the ship's side. A son of Wicananish, the chief of all the neighbouring tribes, was present, when the trade was thus ceremoniously broken up, and with the other natives on board followed the insulted chief to the shore, breathing vengeance.

After this occurrence the interpreter and others of the ship's company begged Captain Thorn to stand out to sea, by way of placing himself in safety from any attempt at savage vengeance. He derided their fears, and pointed to his cannon and muskets as a sufficient defence against a horde of naked savages. Further remonstrances only produced taunting replies from Captain Thorn. The day passed without any signs of hostility, and the captain retired to his cabin at night, without taking any unusual precautions. The residue of the tragical story must be told by Mr. Irving.



"On the following morning, at day break, while the captain and Mr. M'Kay were yet asleep, a canoe came alongside in which were twenty Indians commanded by young Shewish. They were unarmed, their aspect and demeanour friendly, and they held up otter skins, and made signs indicative of a wish to trade. The caution enjoined by Mr. Astor, in respect to the admission of Indians on board of the ship, had been neglected for some time past; and the officer of the watch, perceiving those in the canoe to be without weapons, and having received no orders to the contrary, readily permitted them to mount the deck. Another canoe soon succeeded, the crew of which was likewise admitted. In a little while other canoes came off, and Indians were soon clambering into the vessel on all sides.

"The officer of the watch now felt alarmed, and called to Captain Thorn and Mr. M'Kay. By the time they came on deck, it was thronged with Indians. The interpreter noticed to Mr. M'Kay that many of the natives wore short mantles of skins, and intimated a suspicion that they were secretly armed. Mr. M'Kay urged the captain to clear the ship and get under way. He again made light of the advice; but the augmented swarm of canoes about the ship, and the numbers still putting off from shore, at length awakened his distrust, and he ordered some of the crew to weigh anchor, while some were sent aloft to make sail.

"The Indians now offered to trade with the captain on his own terms, prompted, apparently, by the approaching departure of the ship. Accordingly a hurried trade was commenced. The main articles sought by the savages in barter, were knives; as fast as some were supplied they moved off, and others succeeded. By degrees they were thus distributed about the deck, and all with weapons.

"The anchor was now nearly up, the sails were loose, and the captain in a loud and peremptory tone, ordered the ship to be cleared. In an instant a signal yell was given: it was echoed on every side, knives and war-clubs were brandished in every direction, and the savages rushed upon their marked victims.

"The first that fell was Mr. Lewis, the ship's clerk. He was leaning, with folded arms, over a bale of blankets, engaged in bargaining, when he received a deadly stab in the back, and fell down the companionway.

"Mr. M'Kay, who was seated on the taffrail, sprang on his feet, but was instantly knocked down with a war-club and flung backwards into the sea, where he was despatched by the women in the canoes.

"In the mean time Captain Thorn made desperate fight against fearful odds. He was a powerful as well as resolute man, but he had come upon deck without weapons. Shewish, the young chief, singled him out as his peculiar prey, and rushed upon him at the first outbreak. The captain had barely time to draw a claspknife, with one blow of which he laid the young savage dead at his feet. Several of the stoutest followers of Shewish now set upon him. He defended himself vigorously, dealing crippling blows to the right and left, and strewing the quarterdeck with the slain and wounded. His object was, to fight his way to the cabin, where there were fire-arms; but he was hemmed in with foes, covered with wounds, and faint with loss of blood. For an instant he leaned upon the tiller wheel, when a blow from behind, with a war-club, felled him to the deck, where he was despatched with knives and thrown overboard.

"While this was transacting upon the quarterdeck, a chance medley fight was going on throughout the ship. The crew fought desperately with knives, handspikes, and whatever weapon they could seize upon in the moment of surprise. They were soon, however, overpowered by numbers, and mercilessly butchered.

"As to the seven who had been sent aloft to make sail, they contemplated with horror the carnage that was going on below. Being destitute of weapons, they let themselves down by the running rigging, in hopes of getting between decks. One fell in the attempt, and was instantly despatched; another received a death blow in the back as he was descending; a third, Stephen Weekes, the armorer, was mortally wounded as he was getting down the hatchway.

"The remaining four made good their retreat into the cabin, where they found Mr. Lewis, still alive, though mortally wounded. Barricading the cabin door, they broke holes through the companionway, and, with the muskets and ammunition which were at hand, opened a brisk fire that soon cleared the deck.

"Thus far the Indian interpreter, from whom these particulars are derived, had been an eyewitness of the deadly conflict. He had taken no part in it, and had been spared by the natives as being of their race. In the confusion of the moment he took refuge with the rest, in the canoes. The survivors of the crew now sallied forth, and discharged some of the deck guns, which did great execution among the canoes, and drove all the savages to shore.

"For the remainder of the day no one ventured to put off to the ship, deterred by the effects of the fire-arms. The night passed away without any further attempt on the part of the

natives. When the day dawned, the Tonquin still lay at anchor in the bay, her sails all loose and flapping in the wind, and no one apparently on board of her. After a time, some of the canoes ventured forth to reconnoitre, taking with them the interpreter. They paddled about her, keeping cautiously at a distance, but growing more and more emboldened at seeing her quiet and lifeless. One man at length made his appearance on the deck, and was recognised by the interpreter as Mr. Lewis. He made friendly signs, and invited them on board. It was long before they ventured to comply. Those who mounted the deck met with no opposition; no one was to be seen on board; for Mr. Lewis, after inviting them, had disappeared. Other canoes now pressed forward to board the prize; the decks were soon crowded, and the sides covered with clambering savages, all intent on plunder. In the midst of their eagerness and exultation, the ship blew up with a tremendous explosion. Arms, legs, and mutilated bodies were blown into the air, and dreadful havoc was made in the surrounding canoes. The interpreter was in the main chains at the time of the explosion, and was thrown unhurt into the water, where he succeeded in getting into one of the canoes. According to his statement, the bay presented an awful spectacle after the catastrophe. The ship had disappeared, but the bay was covered with fragments of the wreck, with shattered canoes, and Indians swimming for their lives, or struggling in the agonies of death; while those who had escaped the danger remained aghast and stupefied, or made with frantic panic for the shore. Upwards of a hundred savages were destroyed by the explosion, many more were shockingly mutilated, and for days afterwards the limbs and bodies of the slain were thrown upon the beach.

“The inhabitants of Neweetee were overwhelmed with consternation at this astounding calamity, which had burst upon them in the very moment of triumph. The warriors sat mute and mournful, while the women filled the air with loud lamentations. Their weeping and wailing, however, was suddenly changed into yells of fury at the sight of four unfortunate white men, brought captive into the village. They had been driven on shore in one of the ship's boats, and taken at some distance along the coast.

“The interpreter was permitted to converse with them. They proved to be the four brave fellows who had made such desperate defence from the cabin. The interpreter gathered from them some of the particulars already related. They told him further, that, after they had beaten off the enemy, and cleared

the ship, Lewis advised that they should slip the cable and endeavour to get to sea. They declined to take his advice, alleging that the wind set too strongly into the bay, and would drive them on shore. They resolved, as soon as it was dark, to put off quietly in the ship's boat, which they would be able to do unperceived, and to coast along back to Astoria. They put their resolution into effect; but Lewis refused to accompany them, being disabled by his wound, hopeless of escape, and determined on a terrible revenge. On the voyage out, he had repeatedly expressed a presentiment that he should die by his own hands; thinking it highly probable that he should be engaged in some contest with the natives, and being resolved, in case of extremity, to commit suicide, rather than be made a prisoner. He now declared his intention to remain on board of the ship until daylight, to decoy as many of the savages on board as possible, then to set fire to the powder magazine, and terminate his life by a signal act of vengeance. How well he succeeded has been shown. His companions bade him a melancholy adieu, and set off on their precarious expedition. They strove with might and main to get out of the bay, but found it impossible to weather a point of land, and were at length compelled to take shelter in a small cove, where they hoped to remain concealed until the wind should be more favorable. Exhausted by fatigue and watching, they fell into a sound sleep, and in that state were surprised by the savages. Better had it been for those unfortunate men had they remained with Lewis, and shared his heroic death: as it was, they perished in a more painful and protracted manner, being sacrificed by the natives to the *manes* of their friends with all the lingering tortures of savage cruelty. Some time after their death, the interpreter, who had remained a kind of prisoner at large, effected his escape, and brought the tragical tidings to Astoria." — Vol. i. pp. 117 – 122.

The loss of the Tonquin was a grievous blow to the infant establishment of Astoria, and one that threatened to bring after it a train of disasters. It took place, in consequence of the violation, by the commander, of Mr. Astor's positive instructions to him at parting, by no means to confide in the apparent friendship of the savages, "nor to admit more than a few on board his ship at one time." The intelligence of the loss of the vessel was not received in New York, till many months afterwards. Mr. Astor felt it in all its force, and was aware that it must cripple, if not entirely defeat the great object of

his ambition. In his letters written at the time, says Mr. Irving, he speaks of it as "a calamity, the length of which he could not foresee." He indulged, however, in no weak and vain lamentation, but sought to devise a prompt and efficient remedy. The very same evening, he appeared at the theatre with his usual serenity of countenance. A friend, who knew the disastrous intelligence he had received, expressed his astonishment, that he could have calmness of spirit sufficient for such a scene of light amusement. "What would you have me do?" said he. "Would you have me stay at home, and weep for what I cannot help?"

Mr. Irving's narrative of the proceedings at Astoria conducts the reader to the commencement of the year 1812. At this point he leaves the adventurers on the coast, to give an account of the overland expedition, which proceeded from St. Louis across the Rocky Mountains. The public were already in possession of some information relative to this expedition, derived from the travels of Mr. Bradbury, an English naturalist, who, together with Mr. Nuttall, was for some time attached to the party. It was led by Mr. Wilson P. Hunt, of New Jersey, to whom the chief direction of the establishment, at the mouth of the Columbia River, was confided by Mr. Astor. The narrative of the march of this party, of their perils among the Sioux, and other warlike Indians, and of their extreme sufferings in the Rocky Mountains, forms a highly interesting tale, but one which we have not space to follow, at length. We have room only for a few brief extracts. The first shall be the *finale* of an individual, whose adventurous name will live for ever in the annals of border civilization, the illustrious DANIEL BOON.

"On the afternoon of the third day, January 17th, the boats touched at Charette, one of the old villages founded by the original French colonists. Here they met with Daniel Boon, the renowned patriarch of Kentucky, who had kept in the advance of civilization, and on the borders of the wilderness, still leading a hunter's life, though now in his eighty-fifth year. He had but recently returned from a hunting and trapping expedition, and had brought nearly sixty beaver skins as trophies of his skill. The old man was still erect in form, strong in limb, and unflinching in spirit; and as he stood on the river bank, watching the departure of an expedition destined to traverse the wilderness to the very shores of the Pacific, very

probably felt a throb of his old pioneer spirit, impelling him to shoulder his rifle and join the adventurous band. Boon flourished several years after this meeting, in a vigorous old age, the Nestor of hunters and backwoodmen; and died, full of sylvan honor and renown, in 1818, in his ninety-second year." — Vol. I. p. 154.

The prodigious numbers of wild pigeons, which perform their annual migrations over the American continent, has often been the subject of marvellous and almost incredible narrative, on the part of naturalists. The following curious account of the manner in which each portion of one of these immense flocks secures to itself a reasonable share of the spoils, is given on the authority of Mr. Bradbury.

"The pigeons too were filling the woods in vast migratory flocks. It is almost incredible to describe the prodigious flights of these birds in the western wildernesses. They appear absolutely in clouds, and move with astonishing velocity, their wings making a whistling sound as they fly. The rapid evolutions of these flocks, wheeling and shifting suddenly as if with one mind and one impulse; the flashing changes of color they present, as their backs, their breasts, or the under part of their wings are turned to the spectator, are singularly pleasing. When they alight, if on the ground, they cover whole acres at a time; if upon trees, the branches often break beneath their weight. If suddenly startled while feeding in the midst of a forest, the noise they make in getting on the wing is like the roar of a cataract or the sound of distant thunder.

"A flight of this kind, like an Egyptian flight of locusts, devours every thing that serves for its food as it passes along. So great were the numbers in the vicinity of the camp, that Mr. Bradbury, in the course of a morning's excursion, shot nearly three hundred with a fowling-piece. He gives a curious, though apparently a faithful account of the kind of discipline observed in these immense flocks, so that each may have a chance of picking up food. As the front ranks must meet with the greatest abundance, and the rear ranks must have scanty pickings, the instant a rank finds itself the hindmost, it rises in the air, flies over the whole flock, and takes its place in the advance. The next rank follows in its course, and thus the last is continually becoming first, and all by turns have a front place at the banquet." — Vol. I. pp. 163 – 164.

The same chapter contains an animated account of Black-bird, a famous chief of the Omahas, whose superior talent

had given him a great ascendancy in his tribe ; to which was added the awful dread inspired by a supposed miraculous power of destroying his enemies. The secret of this power consisted in the possession of a quantity of arsenic, furnished him by some unprincipled trader, with a knowledge of its destructive properties. From this time he seemed to be endowed with supernatural powers, to possess the gift of prophecy, and to hold the disposal of life and death in his hand. Woe to any one who questioned his authority, or dared to dispute his commands ! The Blackbird prophesied his death within a certain time, and he had the secret means of verifying his prophecy. Within the fatal period, the offender was smitten with strange and sudden disease, and perished from the face of the earth. Every one stood aghast at these multiplied examples of his superhuman might, and dreaded to displease so powerful and vindictive a being ; and thus the Blackbird enjoyed a wide and undisputed sway. But a great "medicine" was at hand, against which the secret talisman of Blackbird afforded no protection, and to which, in common with the humblest of his awe-struck subjects, he fell a victim himself.

"He still retained his fatal and mysterious secret, and with it his terrific power ; but, though able to deal death to his enemies, he could not avert it from himself or his friends. In 1802, the smallpox, that dreadful pestilence, which swept over the land like a fire over the prairies, made its appearance in the village of the Omahas. The poor savages saw with dismay the ravages of a malady, loathsome and agonizing in its details, and which set the skill and experience of their conjurers and medicine-men at defiance. In a little while, two thirds of the population were swept from the face of the earth, and the doom of the rest seemed sealed. The stoicism of the warriors was at an end ; they became wild and desperate ; some set fire to the village as a last means of checking the pestilence ; others, in a frenzy of despair, put their wives and children to death, that they might be spared the agonies of an inevitable disease, and that they might all go to some better country.

"When the general horror and dismay was at its height, the Blackbird himself was struck down with the malady. The poor savages, when they saw their chief in danger, forgot their own miseries, and surrounded his dying bed. His dominant spirit, and his love for the white men, were evinced in his latest breath, with which he designated his place of sepulture. It

was to be on a hill or promontory, upwards of four hundred feet in height, overlooking a great extent of the Missouri, from whence he had been accustomed to watch for the barks of the white men. The Missouri washes the base of the promontory, and after winding and doubling in many links and mazes in the plains below, returns to within nine hundred yards of its starting place; so that for thirty miles navigating with sail and oar, the voyager finds himself continually near to this singular promontory as if spell-bound.

"It was the dying command of the Blackbird that his tomb should be upon the summit of this hill, in which he should be interred, seated on his favorite horse, that he might overlook his ancient domain, and behold the barks of the white men as they came up the river to trade with his people.

"His dying orders were faithfully obeyed. His corpse was placed astride of his war-steed, and a mound raised over them on the summit of the hill. On top of the mound was erected a staff, from which fluttered the banner of the chieftain, and the scalps that he had taken in battle. When the expedition under Mr. Hunt visited that part of the country, the staff still remained with the fragments of the banner; and the superstitious rite of placing food from time to time on the mound, for the use of the deceased, was still observed by the Omahas. That rite has since fallen into disuse, for the tribe itself is almost extinct. Yet the hill of the Blackbird continues an object of veneration to the wandering savage, and a landmark to the voyager of the Missouri; and as the civilized traveller comes within sight of its spell-bound crest, the mound is pointed out to him from afar, which still encloses the grim skeletons of the Indian warrior and his horse." — Vol. I. pp. 174 – 176.

We are obliged to pass wholly over the adventures of the party, till they had reached the height of land which separates the waters that flow east and west respectively. At length they reached a desolate and broken region destitute of game, affording no natural indications of a practicable route, and impervious to horses. They were therefore obliged to abandon those animals, with which they had furnished themselves at great expense, among the Indians on the eastern side of the mountains, and, as a necessary consequence, to leave behind them every thing not absolutely necessary for their subsistence on the way. The following account of the mode in which articles are deposited for safe keeping under similar circumstances, may amuse the reader.



"Mr. Hunt now set to work with all diligence to prepare *caches*, in which to deposit the baggage and merchandise, of which it would be necessary to disburden themselves, preparatory to their weary march by land; and here we shall give a brief description of those contrivances, so noted in the wilderness.

"A cache is a term common among traders and hunters, to designate a hiding-place for provisions and effects. It is derived from the French word *cacher*, 'to conceal,' and originated among the early colonists of Canada and Louisiana; but the secret depository which it designates was in use among the aborigines long before the intrusion of the white men. It is, in fact, the only mode that migratory hordes have of preserving their valuables from robbery, during their long absences from their villages or accustomed haunts, on hunting expeditions, or during the vicissitudes of war. The utmost skill and caution are required to render these places of concealment invisible to the lynx eye of an Indian. The first care is to seek out a proper situation, which is generally some dry low bank of clay, on the margin of a water-course. As soon as the precise spot is pitched upon, blankets, saddle-cloths, and other coverings are spread over the surrounding grass and bushes, to prevent foot-tracks, or any other derangement; and as few hands as possible are employed. A circle of about two feet in diameter is then nicely cut in the sod, which is carefully removed, with the loose soil immediately beneath it, and laid aside in a place where it will be safe from any thing that may change its appearance. The uncovered area is then digged perpendicularly to the depth of about three feet, and is then gradually widened so as to form a conical chamber six or seven feet deep. The whole of the earth displaced by this process, being of a different color from that on the surface, is handed up in a vessel, and heaped into a skin or cloth, in which it is conveyed to the stream and thrown into the midst of the current, that it may be entirely carried off. Should the cache not be formed in the vicinity of a stream, the earth thus thrown up is carried to a distance, and scattered in such manner as not to leave the minutest trace. The cave being formed, is well lined with dry grass, bark, sticks, and poles, and occasionally a dried hide. The property intended to be hidden is then laid in, after having been well aired: a hide is spread over it, and dried grass, brush, and stones, thrown in, and trampled down until the pit is filled to the neck. The loose soil, which had been put aside, is then brought, and rammed down firmly, to prevent its caving in, and is frequently sprinkled with water, to destroy the scent, lest the wolves and bears should be

attracted to the place, and root up the concealed treasure. When the neck of the cache is nearly level with the surrounding surface, the sod is again fitted in with the utmost exactness, and any bushes, stocks, or stones, that may have originally been about the spot, are restored to their former places. The blankets and other coverings are then removed from the surrounding herbage: all tracks are obliterated: the grass is gently raised by the hand to its natural position, and the minutest chip or straw is scrupulously gleaned up and thrown into the stream. After all is done, the place is abandoned for the night, and, if all be right next morning, is not visited again, until there be a necessity for re-opening the cache. Four men are sufficient in this way to conceal the amount of three tons' weight of provisions or merchandise, in the course of two days. Nine caches were required to contain the goods and baggage which Mr. Hunt found it necessary to leave at this place." — Vol. II. pp. 28–30.

When one contemplates the various scenes of hardship, to which men subject themselves not merely in pursuit of a subsistence, but from pure love of adventure and distaste for settled life, we should be almost led to the conclusion, against every thing but inspired authority to the contrary, that a part at least of the human race must have been Rousseau's forest-born wild men, to whom the mountain and the thicket are by nature more congenial than the crowded abodes of civilization.

There were some persons in Mr. Hunt's party, who joined it, as the boys say, for the fun of it; — after experience already had of the hardships incident to an excursion across the mountains, and the privations of the trapper's life. What but an innate propensity to the desert could induce such men voluntarily to encounter the sufferings of an expedition, of which the following is far from being one of the most deplorable scenes? —

"Forward then did he proceed on his tedious journey, which, at every step, grew more painful. The road continued for two days, through narrow defiles, where they were repeatedly obliged to unload the horses. Sometimes the river passed through such rocky chasms and under such steep precipices, that they had to leave it, and make their way, with excessive labor, over immense hills, almost impassable for horses. On some of these hills were a few pine trees, and their summits were covered with snow. On the second day of this scramble, one of the hunters killed a black-tailed deer, which afforded the half-starved travellers a

sumptuous repast. Their progress these two days was twenty-eight miles, a little to the northward of east.

"The month of December set in drearily, with rain in the valleys, and snow upon the hills. They had to climb a mountain with snow to the midleg, which increased their painful toil. A small beaver supplied them with a scanty meal, which they eked out with frozen blackberries, haws, and choke-cherries, which they found in the course of their scramble. Their journey this day, though excessively fatiguing, was but thirteen miles; and all the next day they had to remain encamped, not being able to see half a mile ahead, on account of a snow-storm. Having nothing else to eat, they were compelled to kill another of their horses. The next day they resumed their march in snow and rain, but with all their efforts could only get forward nine miles, having for a part of the distance to unload the horses and carry the packs themselves. On the succeeding morning, they were obliged to leave the river, and scramble up the hills. From the summit of these, they got a wide view of the surrounding country, and it was a prospect almost sufficient to make them despair. In every direction they beheld snowy mountains, partially sprinkled with pines and other evergreens, and spreading a desert and toilsome world around them. The wind howled over the bleak and wintry landscape, and seemed to penetrate to the marrow of their bones. They waded on through the snow, which at every step was more than knee deep.

"After toiling in this way all day, they had the mortification to find that they were but four miles distant from the encampment of the preceding night, such was the meandering of the river among these dismal hills. Pinched with famine, exhausted with fatigue, with evening approaching, and a wintry wild still lengthening as they advanced; they began to look forward with sad forebodings to the night's exposure upon this frightful waste. Fortunately they succeeded in reaching a cluster of pines about sunset. Their axes were immediately at work; they cut down trees, piled them up in great heaps, and soon had huge fires 'to cheer their cold and hungry hearts.'

"About three o'clock in the morning it again began to snow, and at daybreak they found themselves, as it were, in a cloud; scarcely being able to distinguish objects at the distance of a hundred yards. Guiding themselves by the sound of running water, they set out for the river, and by slipping and sliding contrived to get down to its bank. One of the horses, missing his footing, rolled down several hundred yards with his load, but sustained no injury. The weather in the valley was less rigorous than on the hills. The snow lay but ankle deep, and there was a quiet rain

now falling. After creeping along for six miles, they encamped on the border of the river. Being utterly destitute of provisions, they were again compelled to kill one of their horses to appease their famishing hunger." — Vol. II. pp. 41–43.

The following is still more distressing, and may serve as a *pendant* by land to the terrific picture of the loss of the *Tonquin* by sea ; —

"In a little while, it was found that Mr. Crooks and Le Clerc were so feeble as to walk with difficulty, so that Mr. Hunt was obliged to retard his pace, that they might keep up with him. His men grew impatient at the delay. They murmured that they had a long and desolate region to traverse, before they could arrive at the point where they might expect to find horses ; that it was impossible for Crooks and Le Clerc, in their feeble condition, to get over it ; that to remain with them would only be to starve in their company. They importuned Mr. Hunt, therefore, to leave these unfortunate men to their fate, and think only of the safety of himself and his party. Finding him not to be moved, either by entreaties or their clamors, they began to proceed without him, singly and in parties. Among those who thus went off was Pierre Dorion, the interpreter. Pierre owned the only remaining horse, which was now a mere skeleton. Mr. Hunt had suggested, in their present extremity, that it should be killed for food ; to which the half-breed flatly refused his assent, and cudgelling the miserable animal forward, pushed on sullenly, with the air of a man doggedly determined to quarrel for his right. In this way Mr. Hunt saw his men, one after another, break away, until but five remained to bear him company.

"On the following morning, another raft was made, on which Mr. Crooks and Le Clerc again attempted to ferry themselves across the river, but after repeated trials, had to give up in despair. This caused additional delay : after which, they continued to crawl forward at a snail's pace. Some of the men who had remained with Mr. Hunt now became impatient of these encumbrances, and urged him, clamorously, to push forward, crying out that they should all starve. The night which succeeded was intensely cold, so that one of the men was severely frost-bitten. In the course of the night, Mr. Crooks was taken ill, and in the morning was still more incompetent to travel. Their situation was now desperate, for their stock of provisions was reduced to three beaver skins. Mr. Hunt, therefore, resolved to push on, overtake his people, and insist upon having the horse of Pierre Dorion sacrificed for the relief of all hands. Accordingly, he left two of his men to help Crooks and Le Clerc

on their way, giving them two of the beaver skins for their support ; the remaining skin he retained, as provision for himself and the three other men who struck forward with him." — Vol. II. pp. 47 – 49.

Even this is not the worst that was encountered ; but we forbear to dwell on the painful detail. Mr. Hunt at length arrived with the wreck of his party at the falls of the Columbia River, on the 28th of January, 1812, and in a short time afterwards reached Astoria in safety.

The two or three subsequent chapters of the book contain many instructive notices and sketches of the Indian tribes. The following anecdote shows that we have something to learn of the savages at the mouth of the Columbia River ; —

"In one thing, however, they showed superior judgment and self-command, to most of their race ; this was, in their abstinence from ardent spirits, and the abhorrence and disgust with which they regarded a drunkard. On one occasion, a son of Comcomly had been induced to drink freely at the factory, and went home in a state of intoxication, playing all kinds of mad pranks, until he sank into a stupor, in which he remained for two days. The old chieftain repaired to his friend, McDougal, with indignation flaming from his countenance, and bitterly reproached him for having permitted his son to degrade himself into a beast, and to render himself an object of scorn and laughter to his slave." — Vol. II. p. 92.

It was a part of Mr. Astor's plan to furnish the Russian fur establishment on the northwest coast with regular supplies, so as to render it independent of the casual vessels, which cut up the trade and supplied the natives with fire-arms. This part of Mr. Astor's plan, like the rest, had been countenanced by our own government, and likewise by Count Pahlen, the Russian minister at Washington. A person was also sent to St. Petersburg to make an arrangement there to carry into effect this branch of the undertaking. In the month of October, 1811, the ship *Beaver*, a fine vessel of four hundred and ninety tons, was despatched on this errand. She arrived in due season at the Sandwich Islands, and there received the first uncertain rumor of the fate of the *Tonquin*. This rumor left her company in a state of painful uncertainty, whether there was a factory in existence at the mouth of the Columbia. The apprehensions felt on this account were not wholly

removed till she reached her destination, on the 9th of May, 1812. The arrival of the Beaver infused new life and vigor into the operations of the establishment, and preparations were made for founding several interior trading posts. It was also proposed to send a party across the mountains, to convey to Mr. Astor intelligence of the state of things. This perilous duty was cheerfully undertaken by Mr. Robert Stuart, who, though a very young man and without experience in crossing the mountains, had given proofs of his competency for the task ; and, nothing dismayed by the sufferings of Mr. Hunt's party, boldly addressed himself to the enterprise, in company with four trusty and well-tried men, one of whom, shortly after starting, became insane and was sent back. This party, with less hardship and privation than Mr. Hunt's, but with a full share of the trials of the wilderness, accomplished their journey successfully. They wintered on the upper waters of the La Platte, and arrived safely at St. Louis the following spring, after ten months spent in the journey. The "greatest luxury they met with on their return to the abodes of civilized man" — hear it, dyspeptics, who are daily tantalized by the sight of the loaded board smoking with viands ye dare not put to your lips ; — hear it, *gourmands* and *gastronomes*, whose imaginations toil in vain for the invention of a new dish, capable of stimulating a sated appetite, — the greatest luxury which these adventurers found in the abodes of civilization, on their return from the desert, — "was BREAD, not having tasted any for nearly a year."

In the summer of 1812, the war with Great Britain commenced, an event ominous of disasters to the establishment at the mouth of the Columbia, from which as yet Mr. Astor had received no intelligence. In this state of things, he wrote a letter to Captain Sowle, commander of the Beaver, addressed to him at Canton, and directing him to proceed to the factory, with such articles as the establishment might need, and to remain there subject to the orders of Mr. Hunt. Another vessel also, the Lark, remarkable as a swift sailer, was sent from New York to the relief of the establishment. In the month of February, 1813, and while the Lark was still in port, preparing for the voyage, Mr. Astor received the news that the British North-west Fur Company were preparing to send out an armed ship of twenty guns, called the Isaac Todd, to form an establishment at the mouth of the Columbia. These

tidings gave him just alarm. A considerable portion of the persons in his employ were Scotchmen and Canadians, and several of them had been in the service of the North-west Company. The British government had already, as Mr. Astor was apprized, been urged by the North-west Company to send a force round Cape Horn to break up his establishment. In this emergency, Mr. Astor wrote to Mr. Monroe, then secretary of state, requesting that Astoria might be garrisoned by forty or fifty men ; but under the pressure of other avocations, this subject received no attention from the government. After waiting in vain for a reply to his letter, the *Lark* was despatched in the month of March. It was not till two months after this period, that he received by Mr. Robert Stuart, whose arrival at St. Louis we have already mentioned, the only tidings connected with the establishment, except the disastrous intelligence of the loss of the *Tonquin*.

In the month of August, 1812, the *Beaver* left the Columbia River, with Mr. Hunt on board, to carry on that portion of the project, which related to a connexion with the Russian establishments, on the northwest coast. It was decided by the partners of the concern in Astoria, that, after having visited those establishments, he should be re-landed at the factory in October, by the *Beaver*, on her way to the Sandwich Islands and Canton. Untoward events, among the Russian establishments, delayed his return. November, December, and January passed away, but brought no tidings of Mr. Hunt, and the most gloomy apprehensions of what might have befallen him and the *Beaver* were entertained at Astoria. The alarm produced, by this state of things, was increased by the arrival of an unexpected visiter. Mr. George McTavish, a partner of the British North-west Company, made his appearance at the factory, with the unwelcome information, which he had received by express at Lake Winnepeg, that war with Great Britain had been declared. To this intelligence, he added the facts, that the North-west Company were making vigorous preparations to engage in a rivalry with the Astorian establishment, for the fur trade of the Columbia River, and that the *Isaac Todd*, the armed vessel already mentioned, would arrive there in the month of March, with a view to monopolize it, by the right of the strongest.

This intelligence produced great dejection in the councils of Astoria. Mr. McDougal, left in charge of the establish-

ment in the absence of Mr. Hunt, and already in affliction at the unpromising state of matters, was now, or pretended to be, in despair. The clerks were disheartened; and as the supposed loss of the Beaver took away all means of withdrawing themselves by water, it was hastily determined to fly before the dangers threatened from a state of hostility, break up the establishment, and retreat across the Rocky Mountains to the United States. In pursuance of this resolution, they suspended all further trading operations. These purposes were communicated to Messrs. Stuart and Clarke, two partners in the concern, stationed at successful hunting posts in the interior. They strongly disapproved the rash conclusions which had been adopted, and hastened to Astoria to oppose them. They soon found reason to suspect Mr. McDougal of disloyalty to the interests of the establishment. Their strenuous opposition occasioned the postponement of the projected desertion of the post, till the ensuing year; but the continued non-arrival of the Beaver, and the gloomy prospect of affairs, in other respects, induced even Messrs. Clarke and Stuart to unite in signing a manifesto, in which (agreeably to the articles of partnership) they announced their purpose of retiring from it, if, before June of the following year, relief was not received from Mr. Astor.

While things were proceeding in this train at Astoria, great alarm was felt by the founder of the enterprise at New York. He received certain intelligence, that the North-west Company had, by exaggerated statements of the importance of Astoria, urged a second time upon the British government to send a force to the Columbia River, and that the frigate *Phœbe* had, in consequence, been despatched to convoy the *Isaac Todd*. Mr. Astor once more applied to the government, and the frigate *Adams* was ordered to the Pacific.

He determined to send the *Enterprise* under her convoy, with supplies for the establishment. Before either vessel could be despatched, the exigencies of the public service were deemed to require that the crew of the *Adams* should be transferred to the lakes; and the port of New York being blockaded by a British squadron, the *Enterprise* was prevented from sailing.

In the mean time disaster had followed disaster in the Pacific Ocean. The Beaver had not been lost, but had been most unfortunately delayed on the coast. These delays had



so much retarded her movements, that instead of proceeding in her directly down to the Columbia River, according to his instructions, Mr. Hunt deemed it his duty to hasten her voyage to Canton, where she might dispose of the furs collected on the coast. Proceeding in her himself to the Sandwich Islands, he there left her. She held on her way to Canton ; and instead of exchanging her cargo as she then might have done for a return cargo, which would have realized three hundred thousand dollars in the United States, Captain Sowle held on for a higher price for his furs, till the market declined, and he saw himself compelled, in consequence of "a pressure in the money market," which then prevailed in the celestial empire, to borrow money, on Mr. Astor's account, at eighteen per cent., and lay up his ship till the return of peace ! Mr. Hunt, meantime, was delayed at the Sandwich Islands. He waited in vain for the arrival of the ship, which, according to the plan of the establishment, was annually to be sent. On the 20th of June, 1813, the Albatross arrived at the Sandwich Islands from China, with news of the war. This intelligence explained to Mr. Hunt the cause of the non-appearance of the annual vessel ; and supposing that the factory at Astoria must be in great want of supplies, he chartered the Albatross to take him, with such articles as he was able to procure, to the mouth of the Columbia River. Here he arrived on the 20th of August, ten months later than the time he had fixed for his return in the Beaver. He found the settlement in the midst of the festivities, occasioned by the absurd marriage of Mr. McDougal to the daughter of the one-eyed Chinook chief Comcomly.

Mr. Hunt was not slow to perceive the depressed condition of affairs ; and though at first shocked with the idea of abandoning the establishment, he found himself at last compelled to acquiesce in it, as an unavoidable calamity. He turned his thoughts, therefore, to the means of withdrawing from it with the least loss to Mr. Astor. To effect this object, he deemed it necessary to find somewhere in the Pacific a vessel, in which he could take the stock of peltries collected at Astoria to a market. The Albatross was bound to the Marquesas, and thence to the Sandwich Islands ; and Mr. Hunt determined, after a visit of but six days at Astoria, to take passage in this vessel, in search of a ship for the service stated. He was to return by the 1st of January, 1814, and if any thing occurred

to detain him, Mr. McDougal was left in sole charge of the affairs of the factory. Arrived at the Marquesas, Mr. Hunt learned from Commodore Porter, who was at those islands in the *Essex*, that the *Phœbe*, *Cherub*, and *Raccoon*, British vessels of war, were on their way to the Pacific, bound as was supposed, for the mouth of the Columbia River. Mr. Hunt failed in all his attempts to obtain a vessel at the Marquesas, and after remaining there till the 23d of November, a prey to the most afflicting anxieties, he proceeded to the Sandwich Islands in the *Albatross*. While awaiting here in the long-deferred hope that a vessel despatched by Mr. Astor might arrive, he had the pain of witnessing the disastrous result of another voyage undertaken by that enterprising merchant. The *Lark*, whose departure from New York has already been mentioned, was cast on one of the Sandwich Islands, a perfect wreck, having all but foundered, a short time before, in a furious gale. She arrived with the loss of several of her men, a shattered hulk; and king Tamaahmaah took advantage of the distressed condition of the ship's company, to stipulate for the entire abandonment of the wreck to him, as the sole condition on which he agreed to dole out some scanty supplies to the survivors. Had even this unfortunate vessel accomplished her voyage in season and in safety, the entire ruin of Astoria might have been averted. Its fate, however, had by this time already been pushed to its crisis. In the month of October, Mr. McTavish appeared with a party of sixty or seventy men, in the employ of the North-west Company, and after some resistance on the part of the other partners at the post, Mr. McDougal took upon himself to sell out to this gentleman, as agent for the North-west Company, all the property of Mr. Astor, and the *good will* of the establishment. The terms of the bargain were dictated by the purchasers, and forty thousand dollars paid for furs worth one hundred thousand dollars.

These arrangements being concluded, on the 30th of November, the *Raccoon*, a British sloop of war, arrived in the river. Its officers were in high spirits. The agents of the North-west Company, (one of whom was on board the *Raccoon*,) had magnified the riches which were to fall into the hands of the captors of Astoria. This excitement had been kept up during the voyage by the agent on board, "so that not a midshipman but revelled in dreams of ample prize-money,

nor a lieutenant that would have sold his chance for a thousand pounds." Their disappointment therefore may easily be conceived, at finding that their warlike attack on Astoria had been forestalled in the way described ; — that their anticipated booty had been wrested from them by a trick, and that too by men who had been chiefly instrumental in causing them to be sent on a fool's errand. Mr. McDougal, one of the chief agents of these not very handsome arrangements, was received with pretty cold courtesy on board the *Raccoon*. In reading the account of this transaction, we have not been able wholly to suppress the query, — what would not have been the exclamations of the horror-struck critical press of Great Britain, over Yankee honesty, had this dexterous manœuvre been the work of brother Jonathan ?

On the 12th of December the British flag was hoisted upon the fort at Astoria. On the 28th of February, 1814, Mr. Hunt arrived in the Columbia on board the *Pedlar*, a vessel which he had chartered at the Sandwich Islands, and found the establishment transferred to its new masters, and Mr. McDougal *entered into partnership with them*. To show, however, their liberality, they offered to sell back to Mr. Astor his own furs, at fifty per cent. advance !

On the return of peace, in virtue of an article in the treaty of Ghent, Astoria, like all other captured places, reverted to the United States ; and Commodore Biddle was sent in a vessel of war to take formal possession of it. Mr. Astor, nothing disheartened by the repeated losses he had encountered, endeavored, but unsuccessfully, to induce the government of the United States to coöperate with him in occupying the country. The North-west Company was consequently left to fix itself firmly in the region watered by the Columbia.

This they have done. The spot where the fort of Astoria stood has been abandoned, but another called Fort Vancouver, in the neighbourhood and on the right branch of the river, has been erected by the agents of the North-west Company. The whole region watered by the Columbia is penetrated by their trappers. Hunting parties from the United States also occasionally visit the region from the eastern side of the Rocky Mountains ; but not having a *point d'appui* in any establishment, and greatly outnumbered by the British Canadian hunters, collisions are sometimes said to occur between them to the disadvantage of the Americans. The population indepen-

dent of the hunting business is, of course, small, but is said to be on the increase. Of the restless spirits, who swarm in every part of the country, or flock to it from Europe, a few are already trying their fortunes in this *ultima Thule*. What natural advantages it may offer as the residence of civilized man, cannot perhaps as yet be fully determined. Its climate, in accordance with the uniform analogy of all countries on the western coast of a continent, is much more mild and equable, than that of the same parallels on the eastern side of the continent. The most recent accounts authorize the opinion, that there is the usual average of fertile land, in those portions of the country, where, for geological or topographical reasons, good land is to be expected in any country. Its position at the outlet of the only large river, flowing into the sea, on the western coast of the continent, seems to mark it out as the centre of that great population, which will, in all probability, one day be supported by the commerce of the thousand islands of the Pacific Ocean.

The messengers of Christian benevolence have not been much in the rear of the adventurers, whom merely temporal interests have drawn to this distant spot. Two missionary stations have been taken up in the country west of the Rocky Mountains; one under the patronage of the Methodists, and one under that of the American Board of Commissioners. Interesting accounts from these establishments are in possession of the public.

In our number for October, 1828, we entered somewhat at length into the controversy between Great Britain and the United States, concerning the boundary between the two governments in this quarter. Like the controversy relative to the Northeastern boundary between the possessions of the two countries, it is destined, we fear, to bid defiance to amicable adjustment. By an article of the convention, negotiated in 1818, for ten years, it was left undecided, and the country declared open for hunting and habitation to both parties, but not subject to the exclusive occupation of either. When that convention expired in 1828, the article relative to the Columbia River was moulded into a separate convention, of indefinite duration,\* leaving the matter on the same footing; but from which each party is capable of receding on giving

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\* Not expiring in 1838, as suggested by Mr. Irving.

twelve months' notice to the other. We are inclined to the opinion, that under the operation of this convention, by which the United States and Great Britain are nominally placed on the same footing, the country is rapidly passing, in reality, into British hands.

Propositions, it is well known, have, at different times, been submitted to Congress, to take some measure by way of appropriating to themselves that portion of the country, which is incontestably within the jurisdiction of the United States, and of bringing the question of boundary to a definitive settlement. Formal attempts to obtain the sanction of Congress, to the establishment of a territorial government, have been made in the House of Representatives; for the last time, in 1829, under the lead of Governor Floyd of Virginia. The project found, at that time, but little favor at Washington. Some of the objections to the territorial occupation were unquestionably of great weight; but not a little of the argument ran upon topics, one would have thought beneath the case. Thus, it was a consideration pretty strongly urged against the proposed measure, that, at some seasons of the year, owing to a heavy surf, the mouth of the Columbia was very difficult of entrance. This is an argument not unlike one, which might have been urged against making an effort for the acquisition of Louisiana, that the mouths of the Mississippi are obstructed by bars. The region watered by the Columbia is not much smaller than the United States, east of the Alleghany Mountains. While the settlements are confined to a few hunting posts near the mouth of the river, the surf that breaks on its bar is a matter of consequence, no doubt; but what is it to the ultimate character and importance of a country, equal in extent to the old United States, and stretching for nine or ten degrees of latitude, along the great ocean?

We do not know that we can better bring our article to a close, than by the concluding paragraphs, on this subject, from Mr. Irving's book.

"It is painful, at all times, to see a grand and beneficial stroke of genius fail of its aim. But we regret the failure of this enterprise in a national point of view; for, had it been crowned with success, it would have redounded greatly to the advantage and extension of our commerce. The profits drawn from the country in question by the British Fur Company, though of ample amount, form no criterion by which to judge of the

advantages that would have arisen, had it been entirely in the hands of citizens of the United States. That company, as has been shown, is limited in the nature and scope of its operations, and can make but little use of the maritime facilities held out by an emporium and a harbour on that coast. In our hands, besides the roving bands of trappers and traders, the country would have been explored and settled by industrious husbandmen; and the fertile valleys bordering its rivers, and shut up among its mountains, would have been made to pour forth their agricultural treasures to contribute to the general wealth.

"In respect to commerce, we should have had a line of trading posts from the Mississippi and the Missouri across the Rocky Mountains, forming a high road from the great regions of the West to the shores of the Pacific. We should have had a fortified post and port at the mouth of the Columbia, commanding the trade of that river and its tributaries, and of a wide extent of country and seacoast; carrying on an active and profitable commerce with the Sandwich Islands, and a direct and frequent communication with China. In a word, Astoria might have realized the anticipations of Mr. Astor, so well understood and appreciated by Mr. Jefferson, in gradually becoming a commercial empire beyond the mountains, peopled by 'free and independent Americans, and linked with us by ties of blood and interest.'

"We repeat, therefore, our sincere regret, that our government should have neglected the overture of Mr. Astor, and suffered the moment to pass by, when full possession of this region might have been taken quietly, as a matter of course, and a military post established, without dispute, at Astoria. Our statesmen have become sensible, when too late, of the importance of this measure. Bills have repeatedly been brought into Congress for the purpose, but without success; and our rightful possessions on that coast, as well as our trade on the Pacific, have no rallying point protected by the national flag, and by a military force.

"In the mean time, the second period of ten years is fast elapsing. In 1838, the question of title will again come up, and most probably, in the present amicable state of our relations with Great Britain, will be again postponed. Every year, however, the litigated claim is growing in importance. There is no pride so jealous and irritable as the pride of territory. As one wave of emigration after another rolls into the vast regions of the West, and our settlements stretch towards the Rocky Mountains, the eager eyes of our pioneers will pry beyond, and they will become impatient of any barrier or impediment in the way

of what they consider a grand outlet of our empire. Should any circumstance, therefore, unfortunately occur to disturb the present harmony of the two nations, this ill-adjusted question, which now lies dormant, may suddenly start up into one of belligerent import, and Astoria become the watchword in a contest for dominion on the shores of the Pacific." — Vol. II. pp. 261, 262.

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ART. XII. — 1. *An Oration delivered on the Anniversary of the New England Society, Charleston, S. C., December 22d, 1835; in Commemoration of the Landing of the Pilgrims upon the Rock of Plymouth, December 22d, 1620.* By JOSHUA BARKER WHITRIDGE, A. M., M. D. Published at the request of the Society. Charleston; E. J. Van Brunt. 1836. 8vo. pp. 62.

2. *Memoirs of a Nullifier. Written by Himself.* By a Native of the South. Columbia, S. C. Printed and published at the Telescope Office. 1832. 12mo. pp. 110.

3. *An Address delivered before the Pilgrim Society of Plymouth, December 22d, 1835.* By HON. PELEG SPRAGUE. Boston; Light & Stearns. 1836. 8vo. pp. 32.

WHEN left to our own imaginations, we simpletons of New England fancy that we find very sufficient reason to be satisfied with our history, our condition, and one another. More than almost any other people, we are entitled to call our history our own. Almost as much as any other, we are a homogeneous race; scarcely the Chinese more so. With the exception of a few Huguenot families who came over at the close of the seventeenth century, and who, from religious sympathy, and other causes, were easily grafted on the primeval vine, we are all descendants of English, established here within thirty years from the earliest settlement. We have not so much as a city, which is a *colluvies* of foreign and domestic elements. The interior feeds the seaports. In the principal of these are a few Irish, mostly arrived since the war, but not sufficient in number to be of any account in estimating the character of the population; and of other